

Education

Congressman Murtha believes that providing our children with a strong and affordable education is essential to America's future.

In 2007, Congress passed, and the President signed, the College Cost Reduction and Access Act, the single largest investment in higher education since the GI Bill. The law increases the maximum federal Pell Grant award from \$4,050 to \$5,400 over the next five years while allowing more students to be eligible for the grant. In addition, the law cuts interest rates on need-based student loans in half, from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent, over the next four years. It also encourages and rewards public service by providing loan forgiveness for college graduates that go into public service professions, such as military officers, first responders, firefighters, nurses, law enforcement officers, prosecutors, early childhood educators, public defenders, librarians, and others.

Congressman Murtha continuously works to advance innovative educational programs. In 2004, he secured funding that expanded the Library of Congress's "An Adventure of the American Mind" to California University of Pennsylvania and Waynesburg College. The program enables educators and librarians to incorporate the Library of Congress digital collections into school curricula and provides access to a vast wealth of information and knowledge for various educational programs.

As a part of the Technology Literacy Initiative that Congressman Murtha has supported, more than 1,500 computers have been given to students within 26 school districts in Southwestern Pennsylvania since the program's inception in 2002. The goal of the program is to enhance the educational competitiveness of the emerging workforce, by increasing teachers' ability to impart technology literacy skills through new teaching methods.

He also supports "The Challenge Program," a program that brings educators and businesses together to offer local high-school students incentives to improve achievement and increase attendance in school. The program also serves as a way to introduce students to the exciting employment opportunities available to them throughout the region.

Congressman Murtha is a strong supporter of our teachers, recognizing that without adequate funding and resources, many do not have the proper tools they need to challenge students and increase achievement. He continually listens to educators and parents about what's wrong and what's right with our nation's public education system and higher education opportunities.